M is a hydrogen atom, an ammonium ion, a monovalent metal ion or an equivalent of a divalent metal ion of the groups Ia, IIa, IIb, IVa or VIIIb of the Periodic Table of the Elements;

R^1 is OH or NR^4R^5, wherein R^4 and R^5 independently of one another are H or C_1-C_6-alkyl;

R^2 is H or an alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl or aryl group, [it being possible for these groups to have] wherein the alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, and aryl group are unsubstituted or substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from C_1-C_6-alkyl, OH, O-C_1-C_6-alkyl, halogen and CF_3; and

R^3 is COOM, SO_3M, COR^4, $CONR^4R^5$ or $COOR^4$[, where M, R^4 and R^5 are as defined above, or, if R^2 is aryl, which may be unsubstituted or substituted as defined above, is also H,]; or

R^3 is H, provided that when R^3 is H R^2 is unsubstituted aryl or aryl substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are chosen independently of one another from C_1-C_6-alkyl, OH, O-C_1-C_6-alkyl, halogen and CF_3.

[and the salt thereof.]

2. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [of the formula (I)], wherein

M is an ammonium or alkali metal ion or an equivalent of an alkaline earth metal ion or zinc ion.

3. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [or 2 of the formula (I)], wherein

R^1 is OH or NH_2.

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4. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [of the formula (I)], wherein

R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl or aryl group which [may have] are unsubstituted or substituted with one or two hydroxyl or alkoxy substituents.

5. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [of the formula (I)], wherein

R^3 is COOM or $COOR^4$[, where M and R^4 are as defined in claim 1].

6. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [of the formula (I)], wherein

M is an alkali metal ion or an equivalent of an alkaline earth metal ion or zinc ion;
R^1 is OH or NH_2;
R^2 is H or alkyl; and
R^3 is COOM or $COOR^4$, [M being as defined above and] wherein R^4 [being] is H or C_1-C_6-alkyl.

7. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 4 [of the formula (I)], wherein

R^2 is aryl, which [may have] is unsubstituted or substituted with one or two hydroxyl or alkoxy substituents; and
R^3 is H.

8. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 7 [of the formula (I)], wherein

R^2 is hydroxyphenyl or C_1-C_4-alkoxyphenyl.

9. (Amended) [A] The sulfinic acid compound as claimed in claim 1 [of the formula (I)], wherein

M is an alkali metal ion or an equivalent of an alkaline earth metal ion or zinc ion;

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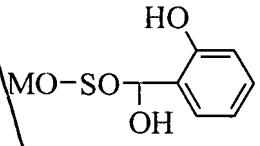
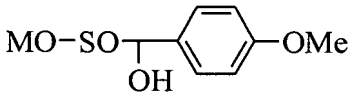
R^1 is OH or NH_2;

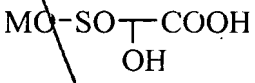
R^2 is hydroxyphenyl or C_1-C_4-alkoxyphenyl; and

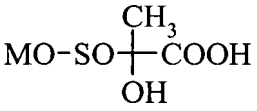
R^3 is a hydrogen atom.

10. (Amended) [Compounds] A compound of the formulae [(M = Na, K, Mg, Ca, Zn)]:









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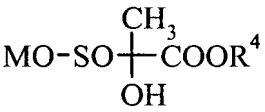

wherein M is Na, K, Mg, Ca, Zn and R^4 is CH_3 or C_2H_5.

11. (Amended) [A] The mixture of a sulfinic acid compound as claimed in one of claims 1 to 10 with the sulfonic acid corresponding to the sulfinic acid compound or the salt thereof and with or without the corresponding sulfite.

12. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 11 having the following composition:

Compound of the formula (I)	20-99% by weight
Sulfonic acid corresponding to the compound of formula (I)	0-60% by weight
M_2SO_3	0-40% by weight

13. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

2-Hydroxyphenylhydroxymethylsulfinic acid, sodium salt:	61-98% by weight

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2-Hydroxyphenylhydroxymethylsulfonic acid, sodium salt:	2-15% by weight
Sodium sulfite:	0-37% by weight

14. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

4-Methoxyphenylhydroxymethylsulfinic acid, sodium salt:	60-98% by weight
4-Methoxyphenylhydroxymethylsulfonic acid, sodium salt:	2-15% by weight
Sodium sulfite:	0-38% by weight

15. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

2-Hydroxy-2-sulfinatoacetic acid, disodium salt:	40-73% by weight
2-Hydroxy-2-sulfonatoacetic acid, disodium salt:	2-7% by weight
Sodium sulfite:	0-33% by weight
Water:	5-30% by weight

16. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

2-Hydroxy-2-sulfinatoacetic acid, zinc salt:	20-70% by weight
2-Hydroxy-2-sulfonatoacetic acid, zinc salt:	5-60% by weight
water:	5-30% by weight

17. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

2-Hydroxy-2-sulfinatopropionic acid, disodium salt:	38-70% by weight
2-Hydroxy-2-sulfonatopropionic acid,	

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disodium salt:	5-30% by weight
Sodium sulfite:	0-33% by weight
Water:	5-30% by weight

16. (Amended) [A] The mixture as claimed in claim 12 having the following composition:

Ethyl 2-hydroxy-2-sulfinatopropionate, sodium salt:	60-80% by weight
Ethyl 2-hydroxy-2-sulfonatopropionate, sodium salt:	0-5% by weight
Sodium sulfite:	0-5% by weight
Water:	5-20% by weight.

Please add new claims 23-25.

23. (New) A method of reducing a chemical compound, the method comprising contacting the compound with a sulfinic acid compound according to any one claims 1-10 under conditions that permit reduction.

24. (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein the sulfinic acid compound is a cocatalyst in emulsion polymerization or redox catalyst system in plastics production.

25. (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein the sulfinic acid compound is a reducing agent component for textile printing, in textile bleaching or vat dyeing or a reducing bleach for mineral refining or fiber finishing.

Respectfully submitted,

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